

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 06675 100741Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6675

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNGA, KS, KN
SUBJECT: ROK MEMBERSHIP IN THE UN

REF: (A) STATE 110260; (B) SEOUL 4055; (C) USUN 2519;
(D) USUN 2488; (E) STATE 184440; (F) SEOUL 6481

SUMMARY: MOFA INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BUREAU CHIEF PROMISED FULL CONSIDERATION OF US RECOMMENDATION FOR LATER CIRCULATION ROK UN MEMBERSHIP MEMORANDUM, BUT STRESSED PRESENT PLAN IS TO DISTRIBUTE MEMORANDUM IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. MOFA APPEARS CONFIDENT POSSIBILITY OF NORTH KOREAN REACTION POSES NO SERIOUS THREAT. END SUMMARY.

1. IN AUGUST 9 DISCUSSION WITH POLCOUNS OF PROPOSED MEMORANDUM ON ROK UN MEMBERSHIP, MOFA INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BUREAU CHIEF CHONG U-YONG PROMISED FUTHER CONSIDERATION, IN LIGHT OF US COMMENTS, OF MOFA'S PRESENT PLANS TO ARRANGE CIRCULATION OF MEMORANDUM IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. IN RESPONSE TO POLCOUNS' QUESTION, CHONG EXPLAINED THAT MOFA BELIEVES EFFECT OF REMINDING UN MEMBERS THAT QUESTION OF ROK MEMBERSHIP IS STILL PENDING WOULD BE MAXIMIZED BY CIRCULATION OF MEMORANDUM AT LEAST TEN DAYS TO TWO WEEKS BEFORE GNERAL DEBATE. CONFIDENTIAL

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2. POLCOUNS TOLD CHONG THAT WE HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH TEXT OF MEMORANDUM, BUT THAT WE HAVE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT TIMING. SPECIFICALLY, ALTHOUGH AUGUST 21 "DEADLINE" WOULD HAVE PASSED, NORTH KOREA STILL MIGHT BE ABLE TO ARRANGE SUBMISSION OF A HOSTILE RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO ROK INITIATIVE ON SENSITIVE JOINT ADMISSION QUESTION.

POLCOUNS REITERATED AMBASSADOR LEONARD'S SUGGESTION (REF C) ROK MIGHT DELAY CIRCULATION UNTIL AFTER COMMITTEE ONE CONCLUDED ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS AND ALSO STRESSED POSSIBILITY FRIENDLY STATES MIGHT INCLUDE FAVORABLE COMMENTS IN GNERAL DEBATE. POLCOUNS STATED EFFECT OF REMINDING STATES OF ROK MEMBERSHIP HOPES WOULD BE SAME WITH LATE CIRCULATION, AND DANGER OF PROVOKING NORTH KOREAN REACTION WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. HE ASKED IF ROK INTENTIONS IN COMING GNERAL ASSEMBLY WENT BEYOND SIMPLE REMINDER OF ROK INTEREST IN UN MEMBERSHIP. CHONG SAID NOTHING FURTHER WAS ANTICIPATED.

3. CHONG RESPONDED MOFA WILL CONSIDER QUESTION OF TIMING FURTHER AFTER FONMIN PAK TONG-CHIN RETURNS TO SEOUL AUGUST 14, BUT STATED AT PRESENT MOFA STILL FAVORS EARLY CIRCULATION FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT. ALL EVIDENCE ROKG IS AWARE OF FROM CORE GROUP AND OTHER SOURCES INDICATES NORTH KOREANS PROBABLY DO NOT INTEND TO SUBMIT HOSTILE RESOLUTION THIS YEAR, AND THAT THEIR POSITION APPEARS TOO WEAK ANYWAY TO LAUNCH AN EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN. CHONG EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT "WE ARE READY" IN CASE NORTH DOES SUBMIT HOSTILE RESOLUTION, ADDING IMMEDIATELY ROKG MEMORANDUM IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVOKE HOSTILE REACTION. CHONG ALSO STATED MOFA IS PRESENTLY PREPARING A LIST OF FRIENDLY AND NEUTRAL NATIONS ROK INTENDS TO CONTACT REQUESTING FAVORABLE COMMENTS ON SUBJECT OF ROK
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MEMBERSHIP DURING GNERAL DEBATE.

4. FINALLY, CHONG STATED THAT ROK MEMORANDUM IS IN NO WAY RELATED TO VIETNAMESE ADMISSION AND ASKED IF US HAD ANY CONCERNS IN THIS REGARD. POLCOUNS REPLIED THAT HE APPRECIATED ROK POSITION THAT THERE WAS NO INTENDED LINKAGE BETWEEN TWO ISSUES BUT STRESSED BELIEF THAT MEMORANDUM WOULD BE BETTER CIRCULATED AFTER VIETNAMESE ADMISSION SETTLED. CHONG NOTED SECURITY COUNCIL HAD ALREADY APPROVED VIETNAMESE ADMISSION AND THEREFORE GA VOTE APPEARED PRO FORMA.

5. DISCUSSION ENDED WITH AGREEMENT USG AND ROKG SHOULD CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS ON MEMORANDUM, CAREFULLY CONSIDERING CENTRAL QUESTION WHEN MEMORANDUM SHOULD BE CIRCULATED FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT.

6. COMMENT: CHONG'S INSISTENCE, WITHOUT MUCH EXPLANATION, ON EARLY CIRCULATION AND HIS PERSONALLY UNCHARACTERISTIC CONFIDENCE THAT ROK CAN DEAL WITH POSSIBLE NORTH KOREAN REACTION SUGGEST MOFA MAY BE CONSIDERING GOING OVER TO THE OFFENSIVE IN UN COMPETITION WITH THE NORTH. EARLY

CIRCULATION WOULD, OF COURSE, MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE
NORTH TO DUCK DILEMMA OF LEAVING GAUNTLET ON THE GROUND,
OR FIGHTING FROM A WEAK POSITION. ROK MAY BELIEVE
THAT EXTREME NORTHERN SENSITIVITY ON ISSUE OF JOINT
ADMISSION COULD GENERATE INEPT, VIOLENT REACTION WHICH
WOULD FURTHER DISENCHANT NORTH KOREA'S TRADITIONAL UN
SUPPORTERS. WE INTEND TO MONITOR SITUATION CLOSELY HERE,
AND REMIND KOREANS, IF IT APPEARS NECESSARY, THAT MEMBER
NATIONS' LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR KOREAN UN POLITICS MAY
REBOUND AGAINST BOTH PARTIES IF ROK PRESSES ITS
ADVANTAGE TOO VIGOROUSLY.
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